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## Fantasy and Reality

Feiyu Bi

Panel: Fantasy and Reality

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## **Bi Feiyu (China)**

### **Fantasy and Reality**

“Fantasy and reality” should be considered by artists as well as by mankind in general. Fortunately, artists have the chance to deal with this theme directly in their daily work. An artist usually works in between two completely different realms, one of reality, the other of fantasy. I will reveal an amazing secret to my friends: an artist has two ears, two eyes, two hands and two legs. This is truly exciting! Nevertheless, an artist must succumb to an unfortunate truth: that is, he has but one mouth. When he is yearning to describe these two different realms at the same time, he may wish particularly to be gifted with many mouths. However, he has only one mouth, often powerless and bereft of words. Here lies a limitation of life. Perhaps this is the reason why kissing, which is the contraction of two mouths, is always mind-expanding.

I firmly believe that every artist, regardless of his artistic viewpoint and aesthetic stance, is endowed with the spirit of realism. I consider “realistic spirit” to be most valuable quality for art, as well as a precious drive for artists. It is no less than a solid cornerstone for an artist. I cannot believe that an artist can be unfeeling of the reality that envelops him; nor can I imagine that one without realistic spirit could manage to ascend into the realm of art. Impelled by natural instincts, obliged by a critical attitude, an artist has to speak out and spread his words across space and time. Here, I would happily inform my friends that there is an emergence of Chinese artists with realistic spirit, as is well-expected by every individual presently living in China.

However, this does not necessarily suggest that an artist must be constrained by reality. The glory of being an artist resides in the fact that he is able to depict the real world by transcending reality itself. In this regard, fantasy is not a “style,” or an artistic approach. Fantasy is, above all, a faculty of understanding. It is a precise, vibrant, mind-blowing ability for understanding, driven by desire and imagination. Born with wings, fantasy is more specific, more alive, and closer to the nature of reality. However, I will argue that on most occasions, an artist is inclined to make a mistake. That is, he may pay too much attention to the feathers of fantasy to notice its two feet. Yes, fantasy is born with feet. Born in real life, it ultimately returns to reality, and by doing so, it turns our dreams into truth. In China, for a considerably long period of time, artists seemed to have neglected this fact. Consequently, they lost reality and thus rendered fantasy meaningless.

Fantasy and reality are never two concepts to be balanced against each other. In fact, a person may emphasize different aspects of the matter. Sometimes artists are devoted to fantasy, other times, reality. To me realistic spirit implies a breadth of vision and courage to confront truth. For instance, I have been working as a writer for nearly twenty years. In my youth I had wings in my heart, as is necessary for a young man to have. Later, thanks to the birth of my son, I recognized that it is important for me, a father, to confront reality—the reality that envelops me mirrors my son’s future. I cannot neglect

this fact, not for a single minute. This psychological transformation alerts me and drives me to make adjustment in my work. I am glad that I became a novelist with realistic spirit. Hence I am happy to answer questions such as: what is realistic spirit? To me, realistic spirit is love, love with wings.

I am aware that it is unwise to interpret the theme of “fantasy and reality” in so few words. Even with enough time, I could hardly accomplish this task. I cherish this chance to talk with my friends, although I do not intend to solve any problem at this moment. If a question is very complicated, we may as well approach it in the most straightforward manner. For instance, fantasy and reality could be put in this way: if reality can be compared to one’s mouth, fantasy, then, is the excessive part that is produced in the cordial collaboration of four lips.